

## ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WILDLIFE & FRESHWATER FISH MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, January 30, 2018

Richardson & Robbins Building Auditorium

89 Kings Highway, Dover, Delaware

Phone 302-739-9912, FAX 302-739-6157

### ADVISORY COUNCIL

1. Edward A. Montague, Chair
2. Garrett Grier, Jr., Vice Chair (absent)
3. Raymond F. Burris (absent)
4. Neal Dukes
5. Craig A. Karsnitz (absent)
6. Joe C. Johnson (absent)
7. Steven M. Kendus (absent)
8. Dale R. Scuse
9. F. Thomas Unruh

### DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

1. David E. Saveikis
2. Enforcement Chief Drew Aydelotte
3. Rob Hossler
4. Joseph Rogerson
5. Justyn Foth
6. Craig Rhoads
7. Karen Bennett
8. Bill Jones

### PUBLIC

25 Visitors

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Montague at 7:00 PM.

#### **Agenda Item 1. Approval of Minutes (Chairman).**

The November 28, 2017 meeting minutes were not approved by the Council due to a lack of a quorum.

#### **Agenda Item 2. Proposed 2018/19 Migratory Game Bird Seasons for Delaware (Rob Hossler and Justyn Foth).**

Rob Hossler, wildlife section administrator, provided Delaware's proposed 2018/2019 migratory game bird season dates. The proposed draft seasons are based on the following criteria: (1) within established Federal guidelines for splits and season dates, (2) maximizing the number of Saturdays and holidays included within the season dates, (3) overlapping duck and goose seasons to the extent possible, (4) minimizing conflicts with November deer shotgun season as well as other firearms deer seasons and (5) extending season dates as late as possible. The proposed dates with highlighted changes from last year are as follows:

#### **Proposed 2018/2019 Migratory Game Bird Seasons for Delaware**

##### **Dove**

Sept. 1–Oct. 1 (26 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.  
Nov. 19–Jan. 31 (64 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.  
Limit: 15

##### **Resident Canada Geese**

Sept. 1–Sept. 25 (25 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset  
\*No liberal hunting options.\*  
Limit: 15

##### **Early Teal**

Sept. 12–Sept. 29 (16 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset. Teal season will be open all day in limited geographic areas consisting of coastal areas east of Routes 13, 113/113A & 1 from south of the C&D Canal to Lewes.  
Limit: 6

##### **Ducks**

Oct. 26–Nov. 6 (10 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.  
Nov. 19–Nov. 24 (6 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.  
Dec. 7–Jan. 26 (44 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.  
Limit: 6 (except coots & mergansers), which may include no more than 2 black ducks; 4 mallards of which no more than 2 may be hens; 2 pintail; 2 canvasback; 3 wood ducks; 2 redheads; 2 scaup; 1 mottled duck; 1 fulvous whistling duck; 4 scoters; 4 eiders; and 4 long-tailed ducks. The season on harlequin ducks remains closed.

##### **Youth Hunt**

Oct. 20 and Feb. 9 ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.  
Bag may include ducks, mergansers, coots, moorhens, Canada geese, snow geese and brant. Standard limits apply.

##### **Canada Geese (Migratory)**

Nov. 19–Nov. 24 (6 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.  
Dec. 15–Feb. 2 (44 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.  
or  
Nov. 19–Nov. 24 (6 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.  
Dec. 7–Jan 26 (44 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.  
Limit: 2

##### **Snow Goose**

Oct. 9–Feb. 9 (107 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset  
Limit: 25-No possession limit.  
\*Bombay Hook - No dates given yet.\*

### **Conservation Order**

Feb. 11–Apr. 12 ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.

Unplugged shotguns and electronic calls may be used to harvest snow geese.

Limit and possession: None.

### **Brant**

Note: To be determined pending February analysis of Mid-winter survey.

### **Coots & Mergansers**

Same season dates and shooting hours as ducks.

Coots – Limit: 15

Mergansers – Limit 5, of which no more than 2 may be hooded.

### **Rails, Gallinules and Moorhens**

King, Clapper

Sept. 1–Nov. 21 (70 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.

Limit: 10

Sora, Virginia

Sept. 1–Nov. 21 (70 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.

Limit: 25

### **Gallinules, Moorhens**

Sept. 1 – Nov. 21 (70 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.

Limit: 15

### **Woodcock**

Nov. 19–Nov 24 (6 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.

Dec. 15–Jan. 29 (39 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.

Limit: 3

### **Snipe**

Sept. 7–Nov 24 (68 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.

Dec. 15–Jan. 29 (32 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.

Limit: 8

### **Sea Ducks**

Nov. 19–Jan. 26 (60 days) ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.

Limit: 5, which may not exceed 4 scoters, 4 eiders or 4 long-tailed ducks. The season on harlequin ducks remains closed.

Season dates apply to the Special Sea Duck Area where ducks may be taken not less than 800 yards seaward of Delaware Bay shore between Port Mahon/Elbow Cross Navigation Light and the Atlantic Ocean at the Delaware-Maryland line.

A handout of the base waterfowl season dates was provided to the Council members and the audience.

Rob Hossler mentioned that in October 2017 the USFWS, after 20 years, agreed that states that do not allow

hunting of webless migratory game birds on Sundays should receive compensatory days for these species, similar to what is currently allowed for waterfowl, which will result in a net increase of hunting days.

A member of the audience asked about the mallard bag-limit and Rob explained that, while there have been lengthy discussions within the Atlantic Flyway Council about the need to possibly reduce the bag limit on mallards in the Atlantic Flyway due to their decreasing population, the bag limit for 2018/19 would remain 4 mallards of which no more than 2 may be hens.

Another member of the audience asked about the proposed tundra swan season in Delaware. Justyn Foth, waterfowl biologist, provided an update on Delaware's proposal and that the season is currently being proposed to the Atlantic Flyway Council and the USFWS for the 2019/20 season, which would allow an estimated 107 permits to be issued in Delaware through a random lottery if our proposal is approved.

### **Agenda Item 3. Proposed Expansion of Waterfowl Hunting Opportunities at Ted Harvey Conservation Area (Rob Hossler).**

Rob Hossler, wildlife section administrator, discussed proposed changes to waterfowl hunting rules at the Ted Harvey Conservation Area waterfowl impoundments. In an effort to increase waterfowl hunting opportunities at these recently restored/enhanced impoundments, the Division is proposing to expand shooting hours from 2:00 pm to the end of legal shooting time (sunset), similar to that at other impoundments on state wildlife areas. The Division is also proposing to reduce the size of an existing refuge area to accommodate one or two more hunting blinds. After a lengthy discussion by members of the audience, the Advisory Council decided to continue the discussion of this topic at a future meeting.

### **Agenda Item 4. Update on Hunting and Trapping License and Conservation Access Pass Sales and Revenues (Director David E. Saveikis).**

Director Saveikis provided an overview of revenues generated from the July 1, 2017 increase in hunting and trapping license fees and establishment of a state wildlife area Conservation Access Pass (CAP) to increase revenues needed for statewide wildlife conservation and state wildlife area maintenance and management. Through January 15, revenue was up \$412,379 (40.7%) even with the anticipated decline in the number of licenses sold due to the increase in fees and the continued trend of additional license exempt hunters turning 65 years of age. These total revenues include \$26,195 from the sale of 774 Conservation Access Passes (8,826 CAPs were issued free of charge with the purchase

of hunting licenses). CAP sales are expected to increase as public knowledge of and compliance with this new pass increases.

Director Saveikis provided an overview of Wildlife Section progress on value-added hunting season expansions and wildlife area access and habitat management enhancements attributable to the availability of increased hunting license funds.

#### **Agenda Item 5. Director Update (David E. Saveikis)**

Director Saveikis discussed moving to eliminate the Conservation Access Pass requirement for the C&D Canal Conservation Area since major maintenance is performed on most of the area by the federal government (the Division leases the area at no cost from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) and to avoid public confusion with the already exempt Michael Castle Trail located within the conservation area (other dedicated funding is appropriated for maintenance of the trail); the Delaware Supreme Court ruling on firearms on state lands and proposed state land regulation changes; and that the 2017/2018 statewide deer harvest has already exceeded 15,000, which breaks last year's record of 14,793.

#### **AGENDA FOR THE 2/27/2018 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING**

1. Approval of Minutes from November 28, 2017 and January 30, 2018 Council meetings. (Chairman).
2. Review and Recommendation of 2018/19 Migratory Game Bird Seasons for Delaware. (Rob Hossler).
3. Director Update (David E. Saveikis).

There being no further business, a motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:52 PM.

